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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Wednesday, November 26, 1941

SUBJECT: "CARE OF WOOD FURNITURE." Information from Forest Service wood experts of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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The news today is about caring for your wood furniture so it will last long and keep its good looks. The news comes from wood experts of the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service.

You know household furniture often has to take a lot of wear and tear. It suffers from hot dry air in our modern heated homes in winter, and moisture and dampness in summer. It suffers from careless movers dents, scratches, bumps, bangs, cracks, hot dishes, water---all the things that can happen to it in the course of ordinary living.

At this time of year wood furniture is likely to suffer most from drying out since the atmosphere in most homes in winter is too dry to keep wood at its best. No matter how old wood may be, and no matter whether it is veneer or solid, it tends to dry out. And when wood furniture loses too much of its moisture, it becomes loose-jointed, or the wood may crack or warp, or the veneer may loosen.

The wood in furniture needs oil to keep it in condition, say the wood experts. They say it is important to keep the furniture surfaces sealed with an oil or polish to keep the furniture in condition to give long and satisfactory service and to look well.

You can buy good furniture polishes, and use them according to directions. But you can also make a very good and inexpensive polish yourself by mixing one part turpentine with 2 parts boiled linseed oil.

Use turpentine and boiled linseed oil polish at least twice a year on varnished or oiled furniture. Turpentine is a natural wood product, which helps

loosen the dirt and grime which collects on furniture and the oil in the mixture penetrates the wood pores and keeps the wood in condition. So the polish can clear up that dull look furniture often takes on. And the polish helps keep checks or little cracks in the finish from showing.

Apply the turpentine and oil mixture with a soft cloth. Then wipe excess off with a clean cloth. Finally, rub the surface until the wood is entirely dry and the fingers leave no mark.

Of course, if the wood is badly soiled, it will need something more than just polishing.

It will probably benefit from washing. And for washing use a mixture of 3 tablespoons boiled linseed oil and one tablespoon of turpentine in a quart of hot water. You can keep this solution hot in your double boiler.

Wash the wood with a soft cloth dipped in the solution. Then rub dry with a dry cloth. And finally apply the turpentine and oil polish.

Scratches on furniture can make it look old and unattractive. One way to conceal little scratches is to rub each one with a nut meat. Nuts like walnuts or pecans work very well. The natural oil of the nut penetrates the scratched surface. There's a commercial product selling on the market that also covers scratches well.

The way to clean a waxed surface of wood that has been spotted or scratched is to first wash it with turpentine and then rewax it. If the wood is dark, you'll probably want to tint the wax.

As for those white spots on varnished furniture, caused by water or hot dishes, here's how to deal with them. Rub them lightly with a piece of flannel dampened with spirits of camphor or essence of peppermint. Then use furniture polish. Or use a drop or two of ammonia on a damp cloth. But remember to use ammonia very sparingly.

Sometimes varnished furniture develops a milky whitish film over the surface. Wood experts say the trouble is probably the original varnish. The milky film is most likely to appear in damp climates. If rubbing with turpentine and oil polish doesn't cure it, there's nothing to do but refinish the furniture.

There, friends, are some of the little ways to protect your furniture against aging and losing its looks and its usefulness. These are the days to be careful and thrifty with furniture as with everything else of value. And some of these easy little ways of caring for furniture may mean that your grandchildren and great-grandchildren can enjoy the fine pieces from your home.

